

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1046
By Niceley

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor John Hitch for his
tremendous contributions to country music in
Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that members of this General Assembly should pause to honor those artists who, through their extraordinary musical talents and influence, bring great renown to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's history is rich with musical traditions, ranging from the bluegrass music of the Appalachian Mountains to country music with its home in Nashville to the world-renowned jazz and blues music of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in the annals of Tennessee's country music history there can be found no more passionate and committed individual than John Hitch, founder of the Tennessee Valley Barn Dance; and

WHEREAS, beginning his music career at the age of fourteen, John Hitch and two other young musicians formed The Country Ramblers and, after playing in a number of local venues, won the opportunity to play on Lowell Blanchard's Tennessee Barn Dance; and

WHEREAS, moving with his family to New Albany, Indiana, Mr. Hitch organized The Nelson County Jamboree, where he regularly booked such renowned country artists as Pee Wee King, Red Stewart, Jimmy Logston, and Red Kirk; and

WHEREAS, after relocating to Knoxville, Tennessee, John Hitch recognized the need for an event where local entertainers and artists could showcase their talents; and

WHEREAS, continuing Tennessee's proud country music tradition, John Hitch organized and founded the Tennessee Valley Barn Dance; and

WHEREAS, held in the WNOX Whittle Springs Auditorium, the Tennessee Valley Barn Dance hosted many country music stars throughout the years, such as George Jones, Kenny Rogers, Johnny Rodriquez, and Charly McClain; and

WHEREAS, the most successful country music stage in the area, the Tennessee Valley Barn Dance is opened with the proclamation made famous by John Hitch, "It's Saturday Night Country Style!"; and

WHEREAS, even today, John Hitch and his wife Ruby host a live country music show on their back porch once a month during the summers, an event which serves as a testament to their dedication to and love of country music; he also hosts and emcees the country music radio show Mayberry Country Classics, which is broadcast on several local radio stations; and

WHEREAS, in his pursuit of the simplicity and ease of a bygone era in small-town life, Mr. Hitch, with the help of his wife, has constructed a replica of the fictional town of Mayberry in their backyard. Those strolling the streets of the Hitches' Mayberry will find Floyd's Barber Shop, The Bluebird Diner, Wally's Service Staton, Emmitt's Fix-it Shop, Ellie Walker's drug store, Charlie Foley's Grocery, Aunt Bee's kitchen, and the courthouse, complete with two jail cells; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body finds it appropriate to honor and recognize John Hitch for his tremendous musical contributions to the Knoxville community and the great State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor John Hitch, commend his contributions to the musical history of the State of Tennessee, and wish him every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.